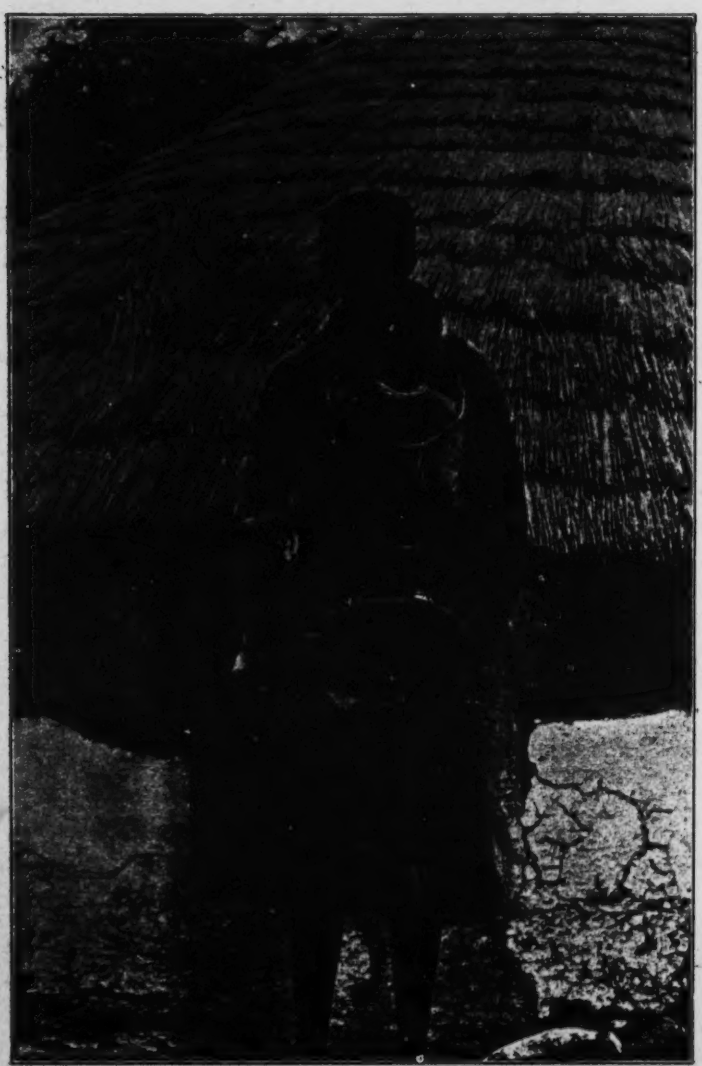
1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

PLATE 2

342
854
291
301



A KATAB WOMAN AND HER CHILD

[face p. 20]

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

PLATE 4

142
291
301

KATAB CHILDREN

Umar p 42

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

PLATE 6

142
291
252
412
301

KATAB WOMEN POUNDING CORN

[face p. 48

1: Meek E. G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

Teeth are not filed or chipped, and there is no piercing of the nasal septum. But women wear lip and ear ornaments. The lips are pierced with a needle at about the age of seven, and a lip plug is inserted, fashioned from the thorn of the *fasah-wari* tree. It is a cylindrical disc with a flange. The front of the disc is hollowed out and a bead inserted. The discs of grown-up women are about the size of a shilling. The ears are pierced at the age of five and rin[illegible] tin inserted. Men also wear earrings in the left ear, but among some families (e.g. the Bobai family of Fakan) earrings are taboo for some reason I was unable to discover.

Men and women both wear iron rings and girdles of brass wire of European manufacture. Bracelets of brass and iron are also worn by both sexes. Women and lads frequently, especially for dances, streak their faces with a black pigment obtained from the dried seeds of an acacia tree. Women also smear their bodies with red earth mixed with mahogany oil. The earth is obtained in a river bed and is reduced to a powder by being burned in a fire of dried cow's dung. The red earth may be a means of protecting the body from the actinic rays of the sun, but it appears also to have some religious significance, as warriors in former times were wont to streak with red earth their faces and also the heads of captured enemies.

All men of the Katab now wear small cloth loin-coverings, the flap passing through the legs from front to rear. But in former times the triangular loin-cloth covering was the rule. Important men also, nowadays, wear a cloth thrown round the body and over the left shoulder. Many, too, wear gowns. For priests the use of cloth is taboo. They wear a triangular loin-covering of leather and over the shoulders a cape of cob-skin, the skin of the animal's forelegs being sewn together to serve as fasteners. The inside of the skin is cured with acacia leaves, the use of wood ashes and paw-paw leaves being avoided in order that the outside hair may be left intact. This was the pristine clothing for all males, and it is noteworthy that even to this day, among the Kagoro, no one may enter a religious shrine wearing garments made of cloth. In wet weather men wear head and shoulder coverings of plaited grass. Girls go about nude until the age of five, and then, up to the age of ten, affect a small apron of cowry shells which jingle with every

KAGORO WOMAN

KAGORO CHILDREN

[face p. 94

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoro
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302

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38

Women of all sections of the Katab tribe also wear a stud or plug (about half-an-inch in diameter and length) in the upper lip. This is not an uncommon feature in Nigeria, but is not found among immediately adjacent peoples, so far as can be determined, and so effectively sets off members of the Katab Group from their neighbours all around.

As distinctive as the *oyam*, though surprisingly neglected by Meek in his definition of the Katab culture-complex, is the massive head-board or tray on which women of the Katab Group carry their loads: this is of unusual size, often a yard long and half as wide, and ovoid (or an elongated octagon) in shape: it is carved of a light-weight wood, flat, with a low rim, sometimes decorated with incised geometrical (rarely, stylized but realistic animal) figures, and invariably stained with red ochre. Meek notes that among the Katab proper a mother delivers her child on her head-board which "thereafter bears a semi-sacred character." The precise distribution of this article cannot be determined, but it does not appear to be used outside the area now occupied by the Katab Group.[7]

The dress of men of the Katab Group does not seem to be distinctive in any particular detail. The traditional garb appears to have been a skin loin-covering, and elders were distinguished by a skin across the shoulders. To-day, cloth is commonly used in place of skin; Hausa-Fulani caps, particularly the *fula*, and gowns, even the *riga*, may be worn by elders in civil occupations. But the priests maintain traditional styles, and all cloth is cast off at religious observances. There is some evidence that certain members of the Group,[8] if not all, wear the penis-sheath—an item virtually universal among tribes immediately to the east and south, in Plateau Province, though apparently not found in historic times westward in Nigeria.

Tribal marks of the same pattern are worn by Katab proper, Ataka, Ikulu, Kagoro, Kaje, Kamantan, and Moroa: for a man, these consist of 41 vertical scars across the forehead, nine on each cheek, and a fringe of 24 tiny cuts along the edge of the jaw; they are similar for a woman, but number 55, 17, and 26 respectively. In addition women receive intricate markings on chest, abdomen, and back. According to Meek (1931) "boys commonly refuse to be marked" to-day; the position as regards women is not clearly stated, but adult women attending the Kafanchan market in 1949–50 with very few exceptions had the markings described. There is no clear information regarding the markings used, if any, by Jaba, Kachichere, Kagoma, and Kaninkon. Early investigators ascribe the invention of these marks to the Katab proper.

(iv) *Social Organization: Marriage Customs*

Katab practices do not clearly distinguish the members of the Group from certain of their neighbours (especially the peoples of the Kauru hills, the Chawai, Irigwe, Kadara, even—according to D. A. Percival—the Shuwalbe and Buli tribes of Fulani in the area, among others); but the practices outlined below are apparently universal among members of the Group, with the possible exception of Kaninkon, about whom no information is available.

(*a*) *Secondary Marriage Constituting Serial Polyandry:* A virgin goes to live as a wife with a man who has made customary payments and performed farm-labour for her parents. After a period fixed by public opinion as decorous, she may leave her first (primary) husband to live with another man, who has secretly won her favour and secured by payments to her parents rights over children which she may bear him: she is, thus, his wife in every sense, but her primary marriage has not been dissolved, and she may, in due course, return to her primary husband. In theory, she may add indefinitely to the number of her husbands, circulating among them, living with each in turn for as long as she chooses (but never less than the fixed period); in practice, however, the number is usually small, and a woman may

[7] Wooden head-trays are used elsewhere, most notably by near neighbours of the Katab peoples on the High Plateau, but patterns differ radically from the Katab.

[8] Namely, Katab proper, according to Meek in *Northern Tribes*, though he fails to mention the subject in *Tribal Studies*, Moroa, according to Temple, and Kaje, according to Reynolds.

3: Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoma

It has been suggested that they formed part of a large group which migrated from the north-west of Zaria, which includes the Kagoro, Attakka, Jaba, Kaje, Kaura and Moroa, to whom they show a certain affinity in language, customs and dress. 101

They speak a dialect of their own, and the majority know Haussa also. 197 191

Their Chief, "Dem," pointed out to Osuman, first Emir of Jemaa, the desirability of the site, and voluntarily paid tribute to Zaria through Jemaa. Circ. 1859 A.D. they ceased to pay, and a large proportion of the population were burnt out in caves in the resulting punitive expedition. Small raids continued until 1894, when they were finally subdued by the Filane and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Emir of Jemaa, to whom the Kagoma District head is now responsible. 648 175

The two acknowledged crimes were murder and theft. A murderer was required to give a bull to the bereaved family, whilst a thief was detained until his relatives paid a horse to the Sarkin Jemaa and two goats to his captors. 682 685

They are excellent agriculturists. Boys are given miniature hoes at the age of three years old. 241 524

They are of good physique. 192

The men wear a triangular-shaped leather loin-covering, or a skin that hangs from the shoulder, and bind their beards with grass. They carry wooden swords. 291

Virgins wear an apron of green strings ornamented with cowries and brass bells. Married women wear a loin-cloth. 291 301

Nearly all the villages are situated on the top of the hills, amongst almost inaccessible rocks. The huts are of mud, surmounted by conical-shaped grass roofs. The interior is divided into three partitions by means of mud-arches projecting from the wall.* 361 342

A girl may be betrothed before her birth, the *fiancé* undertaking that should the unborn babe prove to be a boy he will be its friend all through life. Such an arrangement is, however, of rare occurrence, the custom being for a girl to be engaged to the first man who gives her parents a fowl and bespeaks her after her birth. The suitor further gives her father a hoe or 2,000 cowries every year, until the girl has arrived at marriageable age at about ten years; as the marriage day approaches he gives the bride's father a further present of five chickens. On the day itself, six of his boy friends enter her parents' house, where she is hidden amongst the women, find and capture her, and take her to one of the groom's female relations. They return at night, give the custodian a chicken and take the bride to the groom's house, where he is awaiting her with three male friends who proceed to address the young pair on the duties 584 585

* *Vide* Jaba, p. 163.

3:Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kagoro

342 a hollow groove where a mat or shield might be fixed. Within the hall is a bigger apartment, with a mud shelf over the inner doorway, and with a low wooden bed of palm fronds or bamboo on either side—one for the wife, the other for her family. The inner walls are only some three or four feet high and are either made of red mud or mud blackened with charcoal. Sticks or horns are stuck in them as pegs and the women use low wooden stools. Another double doorway leads to an inner chamber, which is much higher and contains a mud granary on little legs. There is a circular passage-way round this, which is sometimes ceilinged and above which is an attic. The granary is always to the south and the roof is supported by bamboo poles; an egg or bottle is commonly put at the apex for luck. From the outside the huts appear to be round in shape, with the addition of the low oblong verandah roof. The floors, and sometimes the whole compound, are trampled hard, and bits of shard or even cowries are added for ornament. Outside the entrance palm logs, some six feet in length, are let into the ground perpendicularly, and are used as palaver centres.

[352] [197] [351]

142 The Kagoro are small in stature, the men slim and well built, the women ungainly. As a race they are debased by excessive drinking. Their heads are somewhat conical in shape, as infants' heads are massaged to prevent their becoming broad, like those of load-carriers whom they despise.

[273] [356] [482]

302 Women have their heads shaved from the time they are six years old, and at the age of seven or eight their lips are pierced for the reception of small wooden plugs about one inch in diameter and three-quarters of an inch in depth. These are, however, not universally worn. Young girls wear a loose girdle of native string, which is exchanged for a bunch of leaves in front and a thick stem of plaited palm fibre with a broad base behind, hung from two strings. This is a symbol of marriage, though very old women may discard it in favour of leaves. Widows are obliged to exchange it for leaves during the period of mourning, which lasts from ten to sixty days, when they must also allow their hair to grow and plaster their bodies with red earth and grease.

304 291 [765]

301 Beads and horse-hair are made into necklaces, beads and beans into finger-rings. Open brass bracelets and ear-rings of blue glass beads, string or sticks, are worn by both sexes, the latter only in a man's left ear. Old women sometimes wear an iron band round the calf of the leg, while men wear light iron chains round their necks and waists, especially when they are courting.

302 Both sexes smear their bodies with red earth, and for feasts men habitually coat their legs with it to the knee, while women add a black stripe an inch wide from forehead to navel, and sometimes an additional narrow line on both sides. These lines may

3: Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38
Kaje

was then allowed to return to his village on giving an expiatory feast to the Elders, but might neither eat nor drink with other men for the rest of his life. 682

In a case of adultery the injured man could demand the death of both the guilty parties, otherwise they were banished for life, being treated as dogs and fed with scraps out of broken vessels until they were drummed out of the place by old women. Oath was taken by jumping forwards and backwards over a sword, an arrow, a skull, and the leaf of the male shea-butter tree. 684 695

Inheritance was to the male heirs in the following order: Sons, brothers, nephews, grand-children—failing these to the Chief. It was, however, common for a man to give his property away in his life-time, when he became a pensioner to the recipient. A brother or son inherited the deceased's widows, but with that exception a man might not marry the widow of any member of his clan. 428 [431]

In appearance the Kaje is slim and of fair physique, he is well built, but his extreme drunkenness has left a mark on the skull formation. 142 273

The men wear a short gown or leather loin-cloth and the youths plait their hair and ornament it with beads. The women shave their heads and wear a leather string round the waist to which is attached a wide cone with a wooden base. That of a Chief's daughter is bound with copper wire and the base is adorned with beads—the poorer women bind it with bamboo. When working on their farms this is discarded and the married women each morning pluck a wisp of vetch, some two feet long, and tuck it under the waist-belt leaving six inches hanging in front, while the long end is pulled back between the thighs so that it sticks out like a tail. Girls wear a small apron of cowrie shells. In Zaria the women wear wooden plugs in their upper and lower lips. 291 302 [554] 291 [301]

They are excellent farmers and breeders of live-stock. They manure the ground with dung from goats and fowls, and ashes. They are keen hunters (possessing a few horses), and are expert highway robbers, but they respect any property left on the road if a leaf of the male shea-butter tree has been placed upon it. 241 231 224 674

Their arms are the bow and arrow. 911

They live in compounds surrounded by high cactus hedges. The house and granary are in one, the former being entered through a low narrow verandah, which leads into a sort of hall, where pots are stored, and which runs along the whole width of the house. Within this is a bigger sleeping apartment, and within again a circular passage sometimes roofed with an attic above, enclosing the corn-bin. Between each room is a double doorway two and a half to three feet in height, in the grooves of which a mat or shield could be placed. The houses are of mud and the roofs [361] 342

3:Temple G-4 (no date)1922 FF38 Katab FF38

KATAB.

101 161 The Katab are situated in the Kauru District in the south-west of Zaria Emirate, where they occupy an area of some 200 square miles with a population of 5,000; they have also one township over the border in Nassarawa Province.

101 619 304 They are probably indigenous to their district. They show a certain affinity to the Kagoro and kindred tribes, who have adopted the Katab tribal marks, invented only two generations ago by a skilful operator, which consist of numerous short perpendicular cuts along the forehead from ear to ear and thirteen or more long slanting lines on each cheek from ear to chin. The incisions are painted with soot.

197 Their language, too, resembles that of the Kagoro, Kaje, Attakka and Moroa, and their customs are similar.

891 301 302 304 The women wear a bunch of leaves in front, and a conical shaped piece of bamboo, covered with string and decorated with beads and brass behind. They place wooden plugs in their upper and lower lips and shave their heads.

241 694 852 The Katab are good agriculturalists and breed a considerable quantity of live-stock. They are great highwaymen, and the first drop of water that an infant drinks is stolen, that he may be thus early initiated in the craft.

771 823 They are a pagan people, with belief in sorcery. There is a rock named Dutsin Kerrima in Nassarawa Province, which they declare becomes luminous every Sunday and Friday night, when white cattle are seen on the summit, herded by a white Filane girl.

727 273 They are head hunters and drink heavily.